



10 ADMINISTRATION

Effective: 6/1/96

10.21 WIC Staff Requirements: Nutrition Staff

Revised 4/1/03

POLICY: Each WIC project must identify a "WIC Project Nutritionist" that meets State WIC-specified qualifications. The Project Nutritionist is responsible for working with the WIC Director to assure quality WIC nutrition services, including compliance with policies and procedures in the WIC Operations and System Manuals for the provision of quality nutrition services by competent staff. This includes the provision of direct supervision or technical supervision or mentoring of CPAs and other staff who provide nutrition-related services (e.g., health screeners), unless an RD Director maintains all or some of these roles. ("Technical supervision" means on-going oversight of nutrition information provided, education and counseling techniques, and implementation of nutrition-related WIC policies; and the communication of needs and performance issues to the direct supervisor for resolution.)

Staff who certify WIC applicants must meet the criteria for being a "Competent Professional Authority" (CPA).

Staff who provide secondary nutrition education must meet the established criteria.

It is recommended that local agencies expand the roles of WIC nutrition staff by multi-funding these positions in order to provide more population-based and/or additional direct nutrition services in the agency's jurisdiction.

PROCEDURE:

A. GENERAL

All staff performing services to applicants/participants shall:

1. Understand the goals and objectives of the WIC Program in particular, and public health services in general.
2. Respect the diversity of the population served by WIC, and have the ability to work effectively with a low income, multi-cultural population.
3. Have the nutrition knowledge and skills to screen and assess, counsel and educate, make appropriate referrals, and support the nutrition goals of the Program, as appropriate for the WIC position.

B. WIC PROJECT NUTRITIONIST

1. Qualifications



- a) A WIC Project Nutritionist is a Registered Dietitian (RD) who is registered with the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR, the credentialing agency for the American Dietetic Association) and a Certified Dietitian (CD) who is certified with the State of Wisconsin (through the Department of Regulation and Licensing, 608/266-1626) OR who is registration-eligible upon hiring and within six months passes the Commission on Dietetic Registration's Examination AND obtains certification with the State of Wisconsin. To maintain RD status, 75 hours of continuing professional education (CPEs) are required every 5 years.
- b) The local agency must keep copies of the Project Nutritionist's current Commission on Dietetic Registration Certificate of Registration and Certificate of State of Wisconsin Certification on file.
- c) The name of the Project Nutritionist is submitted to the State WIC Office. This person is the State WIC Office's primary contact for nutrition-related correspondence, input on draft policies and procedures, participation in nutrition-related workgroups, etc. The name is included in the Wisconsin WIC Project Directory.

2. Required Responsibilities

- a) Staffing, Inservice Training, and Evaluation. See parts C and D for additional policies pertaining to bilingual paraprofessionals.
 - (1) Provide input to and assist the WIC Director regarding staffing needs:
 - (a) job descriptions, interview questions and rating scales; orientation, training, and annual evaluation procedures for other nutrition staff (e.g., CPAs, health screeners)
 - (b) nutrition staffing (FTEs, qualifications/experience) needed to accomplish goals of the Program, comply with WIC policies and procedures, and continually improve WIC nutrition services, including time for policy development; materials development, planning, implementation, and evaluation; and requirements for providing ongoing technical supervision, and monitoring of staff.
 - (c) training and continuing education needs of nutrition staff (including requirements for obtaining continuing education, as appropriate)



- (d) results of monitoring or reviews of other nutrition staff (chart audits, observations, lesson plan reviews), including recommendations for further action, as indicated
- (2) Train health screening staff on weight and length/height measurement procedures, including plotting (if done by health screeners); hemoglobin or hematocrit testing; documentation of results; and equipment maintenance procedures. A resource is the Wisconsin WIC Health Screener Orientation Manual (distributed to all Projects in 1997).
- (3) Train CPAs on WIC policies and procedures pertaining to dietary assessment; interpretation of anthropometric, hematological, medical/predisposing, and dietary assessment data; risk factor identification; adult learning theory; effective interviewing and counseling techniques; accurate and appropriate nutrition and breastfeeding information for the WIC population (e.g., WIC Certification and Secondary Nutrition Education Guidelines); scheduling participants for secondary nutrition education; food package tailoring and issuance (including formula/medical food prescriptions, documentation requirements, and needed follow-up); referral criteria and procedures; documentation; and confidentiality. A resource is the Wisconsin WIC Nutritionist Orientation Manual (distributed to Projects in 1997).
- (4) Train providers of individual secondary nutrition education as needed to assure quality contacts. A resource is the Wisconsin WIC Nutritionist Orientation Manual (distributed to Projects in 1997).
 - (a) Train providers of individual contacts on CPA functions, including appropriate follow-up on behavioral objectives, referrals, special and non-contract formula issuance, etc.
 - (b) Train providers of group sessions and other contacts (e.g., interactive displays) on nutrition and breastfeeding information needed to provide quality contacts, adult learning theory, group facilitation and counseling skills, education techniques, and documentation.
- (5) Monitor or review the above staff (in parts 2-4).
 - (a) At least annually, observe.
 - (b) At least annually, review at least 6 files per Competent Professional Authority (CPA) and non-CPA provider of secondary individual nutrition education contacts. If only 1 CPA, review at least 12 files.



- (c) At least annually, review lesson plans/summaries for secondary nutrition education contacts.
 - (d) For new staff, more frequent (e.g., quarterly) observations and reviews are recommended.
 - (e) Document results of observations and reviews, follow-up on needed corrective or improvement actions, and communicate performance issues to direct supervisor(s) for resolution
 - (6) In conjunction with the staff person responsible for direct or technical supervision of clerks, develop procedures for training and annually monitoring clerks on nutrition and breastfeeding goals or objectives, client interviewing, collection and entering of nutrition-related data/information into the computer system, policies for food package changes at draft pick-ups, and confidentiality of WIC applicant/participant information.
 - (7) Provide and/or identify and approve appropriate training opportunities for nutrition-related staff (CPAs, health screeners, providers of secondary nutrition education).
 - (8) Keep orientation and training materials and policies up to date (e.g., nutrition-related components in the Operations Manual, the Health Screener and Nutritionist Orientation Manuals, Nutrition Policy Options).
- b) Planning and Evaluation
- (1) Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate annual nutrition performance objectives and/or nutrition education plan(s) per State WIC policy or directive.
 - (2) Review automated nutrition reports for program planning and monitoring purposes; review other nutrition-related data as available (e.g., computer special reports, Prenatal and Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance reports, MCH reports).
 - (3) Attend WIC-sponsored statewide and appropriate regional meetings and incorporate information, methods, etc., as indicated, into WIC Project nutrition services.
 - (4) Consult with the WIC Director regarding:
 - (a) budget needs for staffing, nutrition assessment equipment, purchase or development of nutrition education materials, etc.



- (b) overall WIC services (e.g., clinic flow, outreach, etc.)
 - (c) sharing needs assessment data with agency policy makers (e.g., management, health officer, county board of health)
- (5) Coordination with Other Services
 - (a) Coordinate WIC nutrition services with other nutrition-related services in the agency and in the community.
 - (b) Assess impact on nutrition services of integrating other health and social services with WIC in order to fulfill the adjunct and referral roles of WIC as well as to maintain the integrity of WIC nutrition services; make recommendations for services, as appropriate.
- c) Policy Development
 - (1) Develop and implement policies and procedures as needed to assure consistency amongst staff in documentation of nutrition education and counseling provided, food package tailoring and issuance requirements, referrals, etc.
 - (2) Develop and implement written policies and procedures for issues for which choices are given by the State WIC Office to ensure consistency in the Project. (See attachment, WIC Nutrition Policy Options)
 - (3) Develop and implement written policies for referrals:
 - (a) from non-RD CPAs to WIC RDs for additional nutrition assessment and counseling
 - (b) from non-RD CPAs to other health professionals in the agency for referrals to outside health care providers (e.g., clients' physicians) for further diagnosis and care
 - (c) from RD CPAs to other RDs or health care providers (in and outside of the agency)
 - (d) from CPAs to other community food and nutrition resources, e.g., EFNEP, Food Stamps, food pantries, etc.



- (4) Participate in the development/revision of agency policies and procedures in order to support WIC and nutrition goals pertinent to the WIC population.

d) Mid-Certification Nutrition Education

- (1) Plan mid-certification nutrition education schedules (e.g., adequate number of available individual contact appointments available each month to meet participant needs, frequency of group sessions and/or interactive displays to be offered each month), and procedures for scheduling individual participants for appointments/contacts.
- (2) Plan secondary nutrition education contacts that are appropriate, address participants' needs, and are quality, innovative, and positive experiences for participants.
- (3) Assure that contacts provided by non-WIC staff that are to "count" as secondary nutrition education are quality contacts that address participants' needs and that documentation and communication procedures are in place to assure continuity of care (see Policy 3.33).

e) Quality Assurance

- (1) Develop policies and procedures for providing and approving trainings, on-going technical supervision, and monitoring of nutrition-related staff (CPAs, health screeners, providers of secondary nutrition education, clerks) and submit these to the Regional Office Nutrition Consultant for approval. Technical supervision policies and procedures vary depending upon the qualifications and needs of staff in order to provide quality nutrition services.
- (2) Maintain documentation of nutrition staff training needs and trainings provided and continuing education received (including if CDR-approved).
- (3) Maintain documentation of monitoring procedures, results of observations and chart audits, follow-up provided, compliance of staff with requirements and recommendations, and communications with the WIC Director.

3. Recommended Responsibilities

a) Overall WIC Nutrition Services



- (1) Use Standards for WIC Services: Nutrition Education (including secondary nutrition education, referrals and coordination, nutrition education materials, planning and evaluation, and staff training) and the nutrition-related components of Client Services (including nutrition/health screening, diet assessment, computer activities, and food package/draft issuance) for planning and improving WIC nutrition services.
- (2) Participate in development and review of WIC and/or public health nutrition materials, standards of practice, nutrition care criteria, etc., as requested by State WIC Office or Regional Office Nutrition Consultants.
- (3) Develop other policies as needed to assure consistency in services provided to improve WIC nutrition services, and to assure coordination with other services to best meet the health and nutrition needs of the WIC population.
- (4) Certify and provide mid-certification nutrition education either routinely or periodically in order to keep abreast of participant needs and WIC policies and procedures.
- (5) Serve as preceptor for dietetics or dietetic technician students or interns.

b) Promotion of Public Health Nutrition

- (1) Participate in ongoing agency needs assessment processes and advocate for needed nutrition services.
- (2) Provide inservices to agency staff on maternal and child nutrition concerns and recommendations as needed to promote WIC nutrition goals and services.
- (3) Participate in coalitions whose target population includes the WIC population.
- (4) Write grants for providing population-based services to the WIC population or to a broader population that includes the WIC population.
- (5) Expand WIC nutrition positions into multi-funded positions for the provision of community-based clinical nutrition services (e.g., medical nutrition therapy for children with special health care needs or high risk infants, children, and pregnant women; clients in home health; etc.)
- (6) Expand the WIC Project Nutritionist (or Project Director/Nutritionist) position to a multi-funded Public Health Nutritionist position that is



responsible for community nutrition needs assessment, planning, implementing, and evaluating public health nutrition services in the agency's jurisdiction. It is recommended that the Public Health Nutritionist have at least one of the following qualifications (in addition to being an RD and certified with the State of Wisconsin):

- (a) a master's degree in public health nutrition, nutrition with emphasis in public or community health, or applied human nutrition with core coursework in public health (biostatistics, epidemiology, health administration, health policy)
- (b) completion of WIC Management Institute, Moving to the Future workshop series, or other public health nutrition conferences or courses pertaining to systems development or core functions of public health (i.e., assessment, assurance, and policy development).

C. COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITIES

The following may certify WIC applicants, including prescribing food packages.

1. Registered Dietitians (registered with CDR, the Commission on Dietetic Registration) or eligible for registration and pass the CDR registration examination within six months of hiring. Must obtain at least 75 hours of CDR-approved continuing professional education (see attachment) every 5 years. Certification with the State of Wisconsin is recommended.
2. Registered Dietetic Technicians (registered with CDR) or eligible for registration and pass the CDR registration examination within six months of hiring. Must obtain at least 50 hours of CDR-approved continuing professional education every 5 years. Must be directly or technically supervised by the Project Nutritionist or RD Director.
3. Other Nutritionists who have a bachelor's degree in dietetics or foods and nutrition, or a master's degree in nutrition or public health nutrition, including Certified Dietitians who are not RDs (e.g., those grandfathered in by July 31, 1996, the deadline in the 1993 Wisconsin Act 443). Must obtain at least 50 hours of CDR-approved continuing professional education that pertain to WIC responsibilities every five years (applies to all, not just new hires/appointments). Must be directly or technically supervised by the Project Nutritionist or RD Director.
4. Trained bilingual paraprofessionals who have a *Wisconsin WIC Program Certificate of Completion – CPA* that documents competencies attained through the Bilingual Paraprofessional Training Program. Allowed to certify participants of the bilingual paraprofessional's culture with risks as identified in 5.b)(1). Must



obtain at least 50 hours of continuing education every 5 years per identified training needs. Must be directly or technically supervised or mentored by an RD.

- a) One of following CPAs (as defined in parts 1-4) must be on-site and available to certify participants that the bilingual paraprofessional is not trained to certify:
 - (1) RD
 - (2) DTR
 - (3) Other nutritionist
 - (4) Registered Nurse
- b) The Project must have written policies, approved by the Regional Office Nutrition Consultant, for:
 - (1) Participants (of the same culture) that the bilingual paraprofessional can counsel, i.e., as allowed by the Certificate of Completion – CPA and as allowed by WIC Project Policy Options for Use of Trained Bilingual CPA Staff (see Attachment). Maintain in personnel file or other project-designated file.
 - (2) Plan for periodicity of chart reviews by an RD.
 - (3) Plan for periodicity of certification observations by an RD, and subsequent chart audits by the RD to see outcomes.
 - (4) Procedures for determining training needs (e.g., via chart review, observations, interest in counseling participants with “Project protocol” risk factors).
5. Students in a dietetic or dietetic technician program or individuals in the WIC Bilingual Paraprofessional Training grant program may function as a CPA if s/he:
 - a) is functioning in this role as part of supervised field experience, internship, or Bilingual Paraprofessional Training program
 - b) has sufficient knowledge of nutrition and/or breastfeeding, adult learning theory, and counseling skills
 - c) has been trained in certification procedures (including referral procedures and confidentiality), and



- d) has on-site technical supervision by the Project Nutritionist or other WIC RD and technical supervision by the Breastfeeding Coordinator. An RD must review and initial participants' files to assure accuracy of nutrition information provided and completeness of documentation, follow-up on any errors, misjudgments, or inappropriate services, and report commendations and findings to the Project Nutritionist or RD Director on a regular basis (as established by the Project Nutritionist or RD Director and field supervisor or internship director)
- 6. Registered nurses (4-year degree). Must be directly or technically supervised by the Project Nutritionist or RD Director. Must obtain at least 50 hours of continuing professional education meeting CDR criteria that pertain to the WIC responsibilities every 5 years (applies to all, not just new hires/appointments). As of January 1, 2001, nurses new to CPA positions must have had coursework or professional continuing education on current (e.g., within last five years, depending upon the topic) maternal, infant, and child nutrition issues; nutrition assessment procedures (including diet assessment); and basic breastfeeding promotion and support prior to functioning as a CPA. This documentation must be kept on file. See the sample form in the Attachments.
- 7. Cross-Trained Agency Nurses
 - a) On an emergency basis, cross-trained agency nurses may fill in for regular CPAs. Emergencies include situations in which a regular CPA is unable to work on a certification day due to illness or family emergency; when a regular CPA is on leave (e.g., maternity, vacation); or when a CPA position vacancy is in the process of being filled.
 - b) In the above situations, the nurse(s) must be trained by the Project Nutritionist or RD Director to perform WIC certifications. As soon as possible after certifications, charts must be reviewed and initialed to assure accuracy and appropriateness of nutrition counseling, scheduling of secondary nutrition education, and nutrition-related referrals; and to provide follow-up on areas of incompleteness or inaccuracies.
- 8. Previously-hired CPAs. Others hired under previous CPA policies may continue to function as CPAs. Continuing education requirements apply (i.e., 50 hours of continuing professional education meeting CDR criteria over a 5-year period that pertain to WIC duties). Must be directly or technically supervised by the Project Nutritionist or RD Director. Current policies apply for those who discontinued employment and are now reapplying.

D. PROVIDERS OF SECONDARY NUTRITION EDUCATION



1. Individual Contacts:

- a) RD (certification with the State of Wisconsin is recommended)
- b) DTR who is directly or technically supervised by the Project Nutritionist
- c) bachelors or masters level nutritionist (this includes a non-RD CD) who receives at least 50 hours of continuing education meeting CDR criteria every 5 years and who is directly or technically supervised by the Project Nutritionist or RD Director
- d) Bilingual paraprofessionals who have a *Wisconsin WIC Program Certificate of Completion – CPA* that documents competencies attained through the Bilingual Paraprofessional Training Program for the job to be performed. Allowed to provide individual contacts to participants of the bilingual paraprofessional's culture with risks as identified in 5.b)(1). Must obtain at least 50 hours of continuing education per identified training needs. Must be directly or technically supervised or mentored by an RD
- e) Providers of Medical Nutrition Therapy must be RDs. Prior experience in working with a low income, ethnically diverse population is recommended.

2. Group Sessions or Interactive Displays: Providers of group contacts or interactive displays need a background in adult learning theory, education techniques and counseling skills, normal maternal and child nutrition, breastfeeding promotion, food preparation, menu planning and budgeting, etc., or has a *Wisconsin WIC Program Certificate of Completion – Nutrition Educator*. Must be directly or technically supervised or mentored by an RD. Prior experience in working with a low income, ethnically diverse population is recommended.

E. DOCUMENTATION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

1. Records of continuing education must be maintained. See the sample form in the Attachments.

F. HEALTH SCREENERS

1. This position is responsible for weighing, measuring length/heights, and performing hemoglobin or hematocrit tests on WIC applicants. Additional responsibilities may include plotting prenatal weight gains and children's growth, and making general referrals (e.g., water testing). Must be supervised directly or technically by the Project Nutritionist or RD Director. When WIC services are integrated with other health services (e.g., HealthCheck, immunization, lead



screening), the Health Screener position may assume additional responsibilities, or a nurse may perform the measurements and blood test required for WIC. In these situations, the position must be joint-funded, with the funding proportional to the staff qualifications and time needed to perform the activities.

G. POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

1. The position descriptions of WIC nutrition staff must reflect at least the minimum required qualifications and the required responsibilities in this policy as well as other applicable policies in the Operations Manual and procedures in the System Manual. The position descriptions should reflect the recommended responsibilities, the position that supervises this one, and as appropriate, positions supervised.

NOTES:

References:

- *Standards for WIC Services: Nutrition Education and Client Services* (distributed to WIC Projects in 1998)
- *Personnel in Public Health Nutrition for the 1990's: A Comprehensive Guide*. Washington, DC: Public Health Foundation, August, 1991
- Owen AL, Splett PL, Owen, GM: *Nutrition in the Community: The Art and Science of Delivering Services*, ed. 4. Boston: WCB/McGraw-Hill, 1999
- *Wisconsin WIC Nutritionist Orientation Manual* (distributed to Projects in 1997)
- *Wisconsin WIC Health Screener Orientation Manual* (distributed to Projects in 1997)
- Story M, Holt K, Sofka D: *Bright Futures in Practice: Nutrition*. Arlington, VA: National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 2000. (distributed to Projects at the 2000 Annual WIC Conference)
- S.448.70-448.94 Wis. Stats. (re: Dietitians Affiliated Credentialing Board)

ATTACHMENTS:

- Nutrition Policy Options Form
- Continuing Professional Education Criteria, Commission on Dietetic Registration
- WIC Project Policy Options for Use of Trained Bilingual Paraprofessional - CPA Staff
- CPA/Nutritionist Continuing Education Reporting Form
- Nurse Certifier (CPA) Documentation Form